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ABSTRACT

This document consists of online instructional materials designed for adult education use. It is a seven lesson course designed to help the student develop better spelling and grammar skills, write with greater purpose and focus, and exercise better word choice through an enriched vocabulary. Detailed lessons, complete with worksheets and instructions, comprise the bulk of this material. It may be used by both native and non-native speakers of English, but is designed and conceived of for use by people whose first language is not English. Many of the writing and discussion topics found in the lessons focus on American culture. Within each lesson there are at least three types of assignments. In the first part, the student writes freely about a set topic. In the second part a specific writing skill is practiced. In part three there is more formal and structured writing about a given idea. Necessary technical instructions and support for those new to the Internet and computers is provided. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) (KFT)

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ED 436 986

Writing Better Sentences

Introduction

What Will I Learn In These Lessons?

Writing Better Sentences is a set of lessons about writing American English sentences.

In these lessons, you will practice writing longer, more complicated sentence patterns. Through this practice, your sentences will be

- more clearly understood,
- more interesting to read,
- more varied, and
- more "correct" according to certain rules.

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You will also learn to write sentences that share meaning. These sentences will make short paragraphs.

What Will I Write About?

Writing is a way of communicating with people, even yourself. People write about ideas. To practice writing, you need some ideas to write about.

In these lessons, you will be reading and thinking about topics of American culture. Culture includes the ideas and behaviors of a group. If you are new to American culture, you will be able to write about the differences between your own culture and this new one. If you have always been a part of American culture, you will be able to write about these ideas from an insider's view.

How Does It Work?

Within each lesson you will do at least three assignments. The first assignment is called the **Opening**. In the Opening assignment, you will write freely about a set topic. The second assignment will be about practicing a writing skill. The third assignment will ask you to do some more formal writing about an idea.

You will probably do each writing assignment twice. To begin, you will write a first draft. Your instructor will read that first draft and give you suggestions about how to improve the writing. Then you will use those suggestions to write a final draft.

You will send your writing to your instructor using email. The "e" in email stands for "electronic." This is

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mail sent over the computer. You can do your writing on paper first or just go directly to email.

Using Email

To start your email, click the email button at the bottom of this screen. Put in your User Name and Password. Click on the picture of the mailbox. Then click on the picture of the envelope.

Now you can begin to write a new message.

First, fill in these two lines:

Subject: (the assignment name or the subject of your email).

To: (the instructor or whomever you're writing to).

Next, write the assignment or message in the main message area. When you're ready to send the assignment, click the **Send** button under the main message area.

That's all you do to send the email assignments. But there is another computer skill that can be helpful. It's called copy and paste. Here's how it works.

Copy & Paste

Highlight the part of the assignment you want to copy. To highlight, click the mouse cursor at the start of the text. Keep your finger pushed down on the mouse button. Drag the mouse cursor to the end of the text. You will see the text is now white letters on a black background. It's highlighted. So the next command you give the computer will happen just to this text.

From the menu bar, click on **Edit** and choose **Copy** from the pull-down menu. You won't see any changes on your screen. But the computer is now holding a copy of the highlighted text.

Open your email (as described above). Click the cursor into the main message area. From the menu bar, click **Edit** and then choose **Paste** from the pull-down menu. Now the text you highlighted is in the email box. You can finish the assignment and send it.

Ready to try? Here is your first assignment.

Introduction Assignment

The best way to learn to write is **to write**! So for this first assignment, you will need to complete these sentences. Add the words and punctuation needed to make a sentence. Use meaning from your own life. Try to fill your sentences with as much information as you can.

To begin the writing, you can copy and paste 1-10 into an email, or you can do the writing on a piece of paper and re-type it into an email.

Here's an example of what one student wrote for the first sentence:

1. I grew up in a camp in Thailand, but I was born in a mountain village in Laos.

When you begin, address the email to your instructor. To do this, write your instructor's email address in the To: _____ line of your email. Also type the word **Introduction** into the subject line of the email, so your instructor knows the name of the assignment you are doing.

1. I grew up in
2. I live in
3. The weather here is
4. My favorite story is
5. For breakfast, I eat
6. The best movie I've ever seen is
7. I think computers are
8. I wish
9. My best teacher was
10. In the future, I will

When you are done writing, push the **Send** button to send the email to your instructor.

The Next Step

All right. You have completed the **Introduction** and are ready for Lesson 1! If you have any questions about using the email system or about the process of doing the writing assignments, get in touch with your instructor soon.

Writing Better Sentences

About this Course

This basic writing course focuses on improving sentence and paragraph level composition skills through the use of real-world content and directed activities centered around cultural themes. The course was funded through a grant provided by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning.

Target Population

This course is for students who need more practice putting together words, phrases, and clauses to create longer, more sophisticated sentences. The reading level of the course is 5.0 and the course assumes a basic understanding of English grammar. The lessons are arranged around concepts of American culture. While the course can be used effectively with native English speakers, it was written with an English Language Learner in mind.

Course Objectives

Learners will improve their ability to use a variety of sentence structures, practice writing longer sentences, use transitional words to create sentence pairs, and recognize and use methods of paragraph development.

Lesson Outlines

A list of subheadings and a summary of the assignments.

Introduction

What Will I Learn in These lessons?
What Will I Write About?
How Does it Work?
Using Email.
Introduction Assignment (Complete 10 sentences with information about yourself.)

Lesson 1

The Basic Elements of An English Sentence
The Opening (Respond to questions)
How's Your American?
What is an American?
What Makes an American Sentence?
Test Yourself
Assignment 1.0 (Identify subjects and verbs)
Assignment 1.1 (Write 15 statements about a culture with which you are familiar)
The Next Step

Lesson 2

The Opening (Respond to questions)
The Parts of Speech Review
Verbs Tell Time
Simply Present
Another Form of the Present
Assignment 2.0 (Complete sentence patterns in present tense)
Simple Past
Another Form of the Past
The Future
Assignment 2.1 (Write sentences about yourself and your family using future tense)
The Next Step

Lesson 3

The Opening (Respond to questions)
Sentence Patterns: The Simple Sentence
Prepositions
Assignment 3.0 (Combine a prepositional phrase with a main clause)
Sentence Patterns: Compound Sentences
Assignment 3.1 (Combine 2 sentences to form a compound sentence)
Another Compound Pattern
Sentence Patterns: Complex Sentences
Assignment 3.2 (Combine 2 sentences to form a complex sentence)
The Next Step

Lesson 4

The Opening (Respond to questions)
A Difference of Style
Sentence Patterns: A Review
Assignment 4.0 ((Sentence completion in 3 patterns)
Expanding your sentences
Assignment 4.1 (Write long sentences in response to questions)
Sentence Errors: Fragments and Run-ons
Assignment 4.2 (Edit sentences for fragment and run-on errors)
The Next Step

Lesson 5

The Opening (Respond to questions)
Sentence Pairs
Using Pronouns
Assignment 5.0 (Write sentence pairs)
Assignment 5.1 (Write opinions in response to questions)
The Next Step

Lesson 6

The Opening (Write a set of directions)
Transitions
Assignment 6.0 (Write sentence pairs using a transitional word)
American Dream Awards
Assignment 6.1 (Write a profile of yourself)
The Next Step

Lesson 7

The Opening (Write a summary of what you've learned)
Sentence Patterns
Methods of Organization
Assignment 7.0 (Identify methods of organization)
Using More than One Method
Assignment 7.1 (Write final paragraph around specific idea using an identified method of organization)

Course Author

Judy Mortrude has taught English composition at the high school, adult basic education, and university level for the past 15 years. Additionally, she lived in Korea for two years where she was a foreign language student and worked with Olympic volunteers. More recently, Judy worked as a curriculum writer for a software company, and she now teaches at the Ronald Hubbs Center for Lifelong Learning in St. Paul, Minnesota. This is her first online course. She'd welcome any comments at judy.mortrude@spps.org.

Writing Better Sentences

Lesson 1

The Opening

Before you begin this lesson, stop to think about the language you're using.

- Is English your first language or your second or your third?
- What language do you use most of the day?
- What language do you dream in?
- How about your children: what languages do they speak?

If you only speak English, think about the different styles of English you use:

- one style with friends when you're just talking.
- one style with your boss when you're giving a report.
- a different style when you're writing a letter of application for a job.

Put some of your answers to these questions into an email message to your instructor. To start your email, click the email button at the bottom of the screen. Put in your User Name and Password. Click on the picture of the mailbox. Then click on the picture of the envelope.

Now you can begin to write a new message. In the subject line, type **Opening 1**. In the **To:** line, type your instructor's email address. Then click your mouse into the message box and start writing. Push the **Send** button when you're done writing.

How's Your American?

In this course, you will think, read, write, and talk about two main ideas:

- **writing good English sentences and**
- **understanding more about life in the United States.**

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To begin, look at the word **American**.

Although America is a continent (actually North America and South America are two continents) people who live in the United States use the word American to name a nationality.

Think of it:

- If you were born in Germany, you would say you're German. You would also say you're European.
- If you were born in Vietnam, you are Vietnamese. You may also say you're Asian.
- If you were born in Somalia, you are Somalian. You might also say you're African.

But if you were born in the United States of America you do not say you are United Statesian or United Statese, you say you're American. And with that term it's understood you're from the U.S.A. not Canada or Mexico or any other country that is on the American continents.

There's also confusion about the name of the language you're reading.

- Again, a German speaks German.
- A Vietnamese speaks Vietnamese.
- A Somalian speaks Somalian.

But an American speaks English.

This confuses American kids who naturally think they're speaking American.

English, of course, comes from England. But here in America (and by that you understand America means the U.S.) English is not the same as the English of England. True, the grammar is the same, but the pronunciation, idioms, slang, and spelling can be very different. So the term American English means English as it's used in the United States.

So . . . here we are, Americans. Maybe you were born here, maybe you've come to the U.S. from a non-English speaking country. Perhaps you don't call yourself an American, but it's likely your children will.

Being an American can be hard to describe. Unlike many countries, Americans don't have a national religion or even a national ethnic or racial group.

What defines the country is the **law** - the U.S. Constitution - by which we all agree to live.

What defines a single person as an American is not the way he looks or where she's originally from, but a shared **language** (American English) and a shared understanding of American culture.

American Culture? Because the U.S. is a young country with a young culture formed from so many different cultures, some Americans say we're a country without a culture.

What is an American?

One writer makes this comparison: an American who says American culture doesn't exist is like a fish who says water doesn't exist. American culture, like water to a fish, is the very stuff we live in. Maybe we don't notice it, but it's there.

To start studying the English sentence, read some Americanisms - some truths that describe American culture.

"If you're American. . .

You know how baseball, basketball, and American football are played. If you're male, you can argue intricate points about their rules. On the other hand (and unless you're under about 20), you don't care much for soccer.

You probably own a telephone and a TV. Your place is heated in the winter and has its own bathroom. You do your laundry in a machine. You don't kill your own food. You don't have a dirt floor. You eat at a table, sitting on chairs.

A bathroom may not have a bathtub in it, but it certainly has a toilet.

You take a strong court system for granted, even if you don't use it. You know that if you went into business and had problems with a customer, partner, or supplier, you could take them to court.

Mustard comes in jars. Shaving cream comes in cans. Milk comes in bottles or in cardboard boxes.

If a woman is plumper than average, it doesn't improve her looks.

The biggest meal of the day is in the evening.

You don't care very much what family someone comes from.

You'd be hard pressed to name the capitals or the leaders of all the nations of Europe.

You aren't familiar with Mafalda, Lucky Luke, Corto Maltese, Milo Manara, Guido Crepax, Gotlib or Moebius.

You've left a message at the beep."

These come from Mark Rosenfelder's article on the WWW called "How to Tell if You're American." You can read his entire list at http://xochi.tezcat.com/~markrose/amercult.html.

What Makes an "American" Sentence?

Interesting ideas. But leave the ideas now. Look carefully at how the sentences are written on the page.

People from England speak English.

Americans also speak English.

Sometimes people from England and people from the U.S. don't understand each other.

Which language is most correct?

What is true of all these sentences?

- Each starts with a capital letter.
- Each ends with a punctuation mark.
- Each makes sense.

Those are the basis of the first three rules of English sentences.

1. Start a sentence with a capital letter. Other words in the sentence are lower case unless they are proper nouns.

   Proper Nouns

   Nouns are the names of people, places, things, or ideas. Proper nouns are the names of a certain person or a specific place. For example: Coca-Cola, Elvis Presley, the Chicago Bulls, Buddhism.

   For a more detailed definition of nouns, see a grammar reference book or look up the On-Line English Grammar site at www.edunet.com/english/grammar/toc.cfm and click on Proper Nouns.

2. End a sentence with a full stop.

   Full Stops

   Full stops are the punctuation used at the end of a sentence. Full stops are periods, questions marks, or exclamation points.

   For example: This sentence ends with a period. Do you see the question mark at the end of this sentence?Look at this exclamation mark!

1. A sentence must make sense.

   A sentence has to have meaning. To express meaning, all sentences have two parts. One part tells about a person, place, thing, or idea - it's the subject. The other part tells what's being done - it's the verb. Every sentence must have at least one subject and one verb.

Test Yourself

Which of these are sentences?

1. people should take care of each other.
2. People many countries
3. Learn to be good neighbors.
4. People hatch.
5. The world is a big place

The answer is **none of them**.

- Number 1 needs a **capital letter**.

  People should take care of each other.

- Number 2 needs a **verb**.

  People live in many countries.

- Number 3 needs a **subject**.

  Everyone should learn to be good neighbors.

- Number 4 needs **more information** to make sense.

  People hatch chickens in special boxes called incubators.

- Number 5 needs a **full stop**.

  The world is a big place.

The capital letter and the full stop are the easiest to understand. In between that front capital letter and the full stop are the parts of speech that make up the sentence. These parts of speech can be put together in many different ways.

But, remember, in its simplest form a sentence needs only to have a subject and a verb.

These are complete English sentences:

People talk.
(subject) (verb)

Animals walk.
(subject) (verb

Most sentences are longer than 2 words. They have a subject, a verb, and some other part. Here are simple definitions:

- The **verb** is the action -- what's happening.
- The **subject** is who or what is doing the action.

Still confused? Here's a way to find the verb and subject of a sentence.

VERBS: Since the verb tells the time or tense of the sentence, change the tense to find the verb.

Look at this sentence:

The lost dog barked in the street.

When did this happen? It happened before, some time in the past. How would you say the sentence as

if it were happening right now?

The lost dog is barking in the street.

Since barked had to change to is barking, you know barked is the verb of the first sentence.

SUBJECTS: Then after finding the verb, ask the question **Who?** or **What?** in front of the verb: **Who** barked in the street? The dog, so the **dog** is the subject of the sentence.

Here are Mark Rosenfelder's sentences again. In each sentence, the **subject** is **bold**, the verb is underlined, and the other part in each sentence is plain.

"**You know** how baseball, basketball, and American football are played.

If you're male, **you** can argue intricate points about their rules.

On the other hand (and unless you're under about 20), **you** don't care much for soccer.

You probably own a telephone and a TV.

Your place is heated in the winter and has its own bathroom."

Assignment 1.0

Practice finding the subjects and verbs in these sentences. After each sentence, type the subject and the verb of the sentence.

To begin, either copy and paste these sentences into an email or copy the sentences onto a piece of paper and retype them in an email. Address the email to your instructor. In the subject line of the email, type **Assignment 1.0**. When you finish writing, send the email to your instructor.

"You do your laundry in a machine.

You don't kill your own food.

You don't have a dirt floor.

You eat at a table, sitting on chairs.

A bathroom may not have a bathtub in it, but it certainly has a toilet.

Mustard comes in jars.

Shaving cream comes in cans.

Milk comes in bottles or in cardboard boxes.

If a woman is plumper than average, it doesn't improve her looks.

The biggest meal of the day is in the evening.

You don't care very much what family someone comes from"

OK. Now that you are confident about finding subjects and verbs, it's time to write some sentences of your own.

Assignment 1.1

Think about the list of Americanisms you read.

(If you wish, study Mark Rosenfelder's complete list of Americanisms at http://xochi.tezcat.com/~markrose/amercult.html. You can also look at his lists of French and Brazilian truths.)

Then write your own list of 15 true statements. Write about the culture you know best. This could be people of a country or people from a certain state or even a part of a state.

For example, for number 1 a student wrote:

> 1. People in the Northern part of Minnesota call themselves "rangers" because they live in a part of the state where iron ore is mined called the Iron Range.

To write your own list, think of things that are true for almost all people in that culture. You can use the first three ideas listed here if you wish, and then add your own for a total of 15 sentences. Push yourself to write long sentences with multiple ideas.

1. People in the _____ call themselves
2. _____ like
3. _____ shop at
4. through 15.

Finish this list in an email. In the subject line of the email, type **Assignment 1.1**. Send the email to your instructor.

The Next Step

Great job! You have shown a good understanding of sentence basics. In the next lesson, you will take a closer look at how verbs are used in the American English sentence. See you then!

Writing Better Sentences

Lesson 2

The Opening

As you begin this lesson, read this short article about some people who are studying in the U.S.

This article describes five foreign-exchange students' reactions to the U.S. The article is from high school newspaper. You can read the entire story (and see pictures of the five students) online at http://ghs.bcsd.k12.il.us/voice/jan1997/foreign.htm or read just a part here:

Five Foreign Students get a taste of American culture

By Katie Fuener
Voice staff writer

Imagine coming from a totally different country with a different language and a different type of people to the small town of Chatham, Illinois to experience the American way of life. They had a lot to say about their experiences and opinions about their stays so far.

Marita Mathisen is from a small town in Northern Norway. A senior at GHS, she likes all of the school spirit and activities that American schools provide.

Like most teenagers, her favorite food is pizza. She misses her family and friends, but she does not feel homesick. Soccer is Marita's favorite past time. In the spring, Marita hopes to join the girls' soccer team.

Tini Neiderlag is from Bielfeld, Germany. Since Tini is not sponsored by a foreign exchange program, she is not able to play any school sports. This is too bad because one of Tini's favorite things is playing sports.

Tini dislikes the way Americans use cars. She feels we are too dependent on them for transportation. When asked the main difference between Germany and the U.S., she said, "The stores! They are so huge here!"

Before you go on into the rest of the lesson, do some thinking and some writing about your own experiences with American culture.

Write about these questions:

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- *What is easy about living in America and what is hard?*
- *What would you change about your daily life here?*
- *If you have lived in another country, how does daily life in that culture compare to this?*

When you're ready to start writing about these ideas, open an email to your instructor and just write. Share your observations and opinions about American life. Write your instructor's email address in the To: _____ line of the email. In the subject line of the email, write the name of the assignment: **Opening 2**. After you've sent the email, return to continue this lesson.

The Parts of Speech Review

In the past lesson, you focused on some basic rules of an English sentence. As you wrote, you thought about using a capital letter at the beginning of your sentence, using a full stop at the end of the sentence, and using a subject/verb pattern to write the sentence.

In this lesson, you will continue to write and study sentences. The writing focus will be on the verb part of the sentence.

However, before taking a closer look at verbs, you may want to review the basic parts of speech of English. When describing the rules you uncover about verbs, being able to name the surrounding parts of speech can be very helpful.

So, here's a quick summary:

Noun: a person, place, thing, or quality

Example: Many American families have a cat or dog.

Pronoun: a word used in place of a noun

Example: Americans love their cars and take good care of them.

Verb: a word or group of words that show an action or a state of being

Example: Americans are working longer hours than they did ten years ago.

a word that describes a noun or pronoun.

Example: families need childcare for their children.

Adverb: a word that describes a verb, adjective, or other adverb

Example: It is very important to solve childcare problems quickly.

Preposition: a word that starts a phrase which adds detail

Example: Many Americans from the northern states move to the south in their later years.

OK. So what part of speech is the word **rock**?

Ouch! There's a rock in my shoe.

Please rock the baby while I warm up her bottle.

My kids love to suck on rock candy.

The answer to that question is not so simple. Because **where** a word is used in a sentence determines it's part of

speech. **Rock** is used in three different ways in the sentences above.

In the first sentence,

Ouch! There's a **rock** in my shoe.
it's a thing - a **noun**.

In the second sentence,

Please rock the baby while I warm up her bottle.
it's an action - a **verb**.

In the third sentence,

My kids love to suck on rock candy.
it's describing a thing - an adjective.

If you're not totally comfortable with these terms, don't worry. At least you know where to look for information. And if you wish to read longer, better definitions look in a grammar text. Or connect to a grammar web site such as On-Line English Grammar .

You can also quiz yourself on grammar skills at Dave's ESL Café, or at a site from a University in Japan.

Verbs Tell Time

The verb can be the most difficult part of a sentence to master. That's because English verbs change form.

In English, verbs are the part of a sentence that tells the time - when something happened. This is called the tense. The three basic tenses in English are past, present, future. But it's not that simple because within each tense, there are different ways of expressing action. Is the action done or still continuing? Or is it going on now but will be done by a certain time? Each situation requires a slightly different verb form.

In fact, changing the time of the sentence is a great way to find the sentence's verb.

For example:

While walking, I watch for signs of animal life.

What's the verb? If you rely only on the definition of a verb is an action, you have two possible choices. Walking is an action, but watch is also an action. To decide between the two, say the sentence as if it happened at a different time.

While walking, I watched for signs of animal life.

The word that had to change was **watch** to **watching**. So you find that **watch** is the verb of the sentence.

Simply Present

Start by looking at these sentences.

- The hard-working reporter writes at the computer.
- Several reporters write stories for our magazine.
- Water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit or 0 degrees Celsius.

- Bottles of pop freeze if left outside in the winter.
- The crying baby belongs to me.
- The laughing children belong to my brother.
- Ahmed owns a 1997 Toyota.
- I own a '95 Civic.

What can you learn about verb tense from studying them?

First of all, **when** are they happening?

Is the reporter finished working or does she still work?

Has water stopped freezing at 32 degrees Fahrenheit?

Did I sell my car?

No. These events are not in the past, they are in the present. But are they happening right now? Not necessarily, it is more that the sentences tell of things true at this time.

One of the main reasons for writing in present tense is to talk about things that are true or things which happen the same way over and over. This is called the simple present tense. Simple, huh? But there's one trick to it.

Look again at the sentences from above. Here the verbs are in bold type.

- The hard-working reporter **writes** at the computer.
- Several reporters **write** stories for our magazine.
- Water **freezes** at 32 degrees Fahrenheit or 0 degrees Celsius.
- Bottles of pop **freeze** if left outside in the winter.
- The crying baby **belongs** to me.
- The laughing children **belong** to my brother.
- Ahmed **owns** a 1997 Toyota.
- I **own** a '95 Civic.

Why do some of the verbs have an -s at the end and others don't? The hard-working reporter is one person who **writes**, but several reporters together **write**. The crying baby is one child who **belongs** to me, but the kids who are laughing **belong** to my brother. See the pattern?

In the simple present tense, singular nouns need a singular verb. And a singular verb is made by adding an -s. Confused? It's because nouns and verbs act in opposite ways.

Watch:

With nouns, you add an -s to make a plural:

Cow Cows hat hats car cars

But, with verbs you add an -s to make a singular

PLURAL Cows eat. Cars use gas. Hats keep you warm.

SINGULAR A cow eats. A car uses gas. A hat keeps you warm.

For one final confusing point about the simple present tense, read these sentences:

I eat an early breakfast. I keep birds as pets.

You use too much toothpaste. You eat politely.

I and **you** are singular, right? There's only one person in **you**, and **I** am the only one of me. But **I** and **you** don't use a singular present tense verb.

Another Form of the Present

Take a look at these sentences:

- He is a tennis player.
- It is raining so hard!
- Chue and Neng are from Laos.
- They are crazy to leave this paradise.
- I am hungry for kimchi.
- Bob is in trouble.

Are they describing something from the past or of the present?

Is it done raining or is it raining still?

Am I done being hungry or am I hungry still?

These, too, are present tense sentences. But the verbs used in these sentences are different from the first group you studied.

These sentences use *be* verbs. The *be* verb can by very confusing to someone learning English as a foreign language because it is used so often and has so many parts to it.

Here are the present tense forms of the *be* verb: **is am are**

The computer **is** an IBM.
I **am** from Mexico.

My fingers **are** typing.

So, are these sentences?

The computer is. I am. My fingers are.

No, these aren't sentences. The ***be*** verb cannot be used alone. The ***be*** verb is used as part of a verb phrase. So to use it correctly, you need to know what can follow **is am are**.

Let's focus on 4 different things that can follow the ***be*** verb.

1. **a noun**
   I am a woman.
2. **an adjective or an age**
   He is overweight.
   I am 37.
3. **a verb +ing**
   The man is singing.
4. **a prepositional phrase +a noun**
   They are from Nairobi.

Plus, you can use more than one of these four in a sentence.

I am a woman of strong opinions.

The man is singing in the shower.

OK. Here are some sentences from the article you read earlier. All the sentences use a ***be*** verb. See if you can identify what follows the ***be*** verb.

1. Marita Mathisen **is from** a small town in Northern Norway.
2. Like most teenagers, her favorite food **is pizza**.
3. Some of her favorite hobbies **are listening** to music, being with friends, and playing sports.
4. This **is** too bad because one of Tini's favorite things **is** playing sports.

Here are the answers:

1. Prepositional phrase + noun (two of them actually)
2. noun
3. verb +ing (three in a row)

4. adjective, verb +ing

One more thing. The negative of a *be* verb is formed by using the word **not** right after the *be* verb.

The computer *is* **not** an IBM.
I *a m* **not** from Mexico.
My fingers *are* **not** typing.

To get a little practice with the *be* verb and the matching of singular and plural forms, complete the next exercise.

Assignment 2.0

To begin this assignment, you can copy and paste this exercise into an email or write it out on paper before opening an email. Remember to address the email to your instructor and to type **Assignment 2.0** in the subject line of the email.

For Part 1, follow the pattern described in order to finish each sentence. For example, this is what a student wrote for sentence number one.

Be verb + noun

1. They are wrestlers.

Part 1: Complete these sentences following the patterns:

Be verb + noun

1. They are _____.

2.

3.

Be verb with adjective or age

4. I am _____.

5.

6.

Be verb with verb +ing

7. She is _____.

8.

9.

Be verb with prepositional phrase +noun

10. They are _____.

11.

12.

For Part 2, choose which form of the verb in the parenthesis matches the noun. If the noun is plural, you must use the plural form of the verb. Then complete the sentence with more information.

For example, this is a sentence for number 13:

13. Men work hard on-the-job but not so hard at home.

Part 2: Use the subject provided and choose the correct verb form to match. Then continue writing the sentence.

14. Men (work/works)
15. The child (play/plays)
16. Cars (drive/drives)
17. Americans (watch/watches)
18. The President (travel/travels)
19. American women (work/works)
20. People (want/wants)
21. I (think/thinks)

Send this email to your instructor and then return to complete the lesson.

Simple Past

Now, take a look at the sentences:

- The crying baby belonged to me.
- The laughing children belonged to my brother.
- Ahmed owned a 1997 Toyota.
- I owned a '95 Civic.

When did these events happen? Is that crying baby still mine? Do I still own a Civic? No. These sentences use the **past tense** of a verb to talk about an action or event that is done with, the action is complete.

Notice that the regular past tense form is used by adding -ed to the end of the verb

belong

belonged

And also notice that the past tense form stays the same whether the subject of the sentence is plural or singular.

(singular) The crying baby **belonged** . . .

(plural) The laughing children **belonged** . . .

So, the regular past tense form is easy to make. But, of course, nothing can be that easy in English. The trick here is that many, many verbs have an irregular past tense form.

For example, **write** becomes **wrote**:

The hard-working reporter **wrote** at the computer.

Several reporters **wrote** stories for our magazine.

And **freeze** becomes **froze**:

Water **froze** at 32 degrees Fahrenheit or 0 degrees Celsius.

Bottles of pop **froze** if left outside in the winter.

The only way to learn irregular forms, is to study a list of them. You can find a list in most grammar texts. For more study of verbs, including a look at irregular forms, see "Understanding Parts of Speech".

Another Form of the Past

Take a look at these sentences:

- He was a tennis player.
- It was raining so hard!
- Chue and Neng were from Laos.
- They were crazy to leave this paradise.
- I was hungry for kimchi.
- Bob was in trouble.

Is the rain still coming down? Am I still hungry? No. These sentences describe things that are completed, events from the past. And they use the be verb in the same way it was used for the present tense.

The past tenses of the be verb are **was** and **were**. You use the same additional parts to follow the past tense forms as you did with the present tense forms.

- I was a dancer. (noun)
- I was 30 years old. (age or adjective)
- They were working. (verb +ing)
- They were from Tibet. (preposition + noun)

The Future

- I will be a dancer.
- I could be playing football right now!
- They could work from 7 AM until 4 PM.

- The water should freeze when it reaches 32 degrees Fahrenheit.

What can you say about WHEN these events happened?

- Am I a dancer yet?
- Am I playing football?
- Have they worked?
- Has the water frozen?

Not yet. None of these events has happened yet. You use the future tense of the verb to describe an event that will be completed at a time yet to come.

Notice that using the future tense does not involve changing the form of the verb. You don't add an ending or use an irregular form. Instead, future tense is made by adding helping words.

One way to make the future tense is by adding a helping word to a present tense verb.

Helping words are words like **have**, **be**, **will**, **could**, **should**, **shall**.

Will be a dancer **could be** playing **could** work **should** freeze

But how about these sentences:

I **am working** next week. They **are studying** tomorrow night.

They talk about the present without helping words. Instead, they add words that let you know the action will happen in the future. Here you are making the future tense by using the present tense *be +ing* form along with words that express future time.

These are the basics on the three tenses: past, present, future. There is more to study about each form, but the basic forms will get you started.

If you want to do some more reading about tenses, you can go to the Elementary Grammar web site.

For your last assignment in this lesson, practice writing in the past and future tense forms.

Assignment 2.1

Write 10 sentences about yourself or your family using the past tense. You will describe things that were done in the past. Use the past tense of the *be* verbs (was, were) with one of the four patterns you practiced in Assignment 2.0, or use a regular past tense verb.

For example, here are some sentences about the past:

I was a waitress at a small restaurant during college. I worked the graveyard shift from 11 PM - 7 AM most weekends. I met a lot of truck drivers and travelers.

1 ® 10 Write your own sentences.

Write 10 sentences about yourself or your family using the future tense verb. You will describe things that will be done in the future. Use the helping words with present tense verbs.

For example, here are some sentences about the future:

My daughter is in junior high next year. Both my kids will finish high school in 2008. As adults, they will have jobs that haven't even been invented yet.

11 ® 20 Write your own sentences.

Write **Assignment 2.1** in the subject line of the email and your instructor's email address in the To: _____ line.

The Next Step

Congratulations! You have completed three different assignments, and you have used three different verb tenses to talk about the past, present and future. You're ready for Lesson 3!

Writing Better Sentences

Lesson 3

The Opening

The actions of people change culture. American culture and American society have changed as the roles - the expected actions - of women and men have changed. To begin this third lesson, read and think about the changing roles of American men and American women.

A recent magazine article presents the changing situation this way:

> Once there were only two: male and female. Men, mostly, were the big ones, with deep voices and sturdy shoes, sitting with legs splayed. Women, mostly, were the smaller ones, with dainty high heels, legs crossed tightly at the ankle, and painted mouths. It was easy to tell them apart. These days, it's not so easy. Men wear makeup and women smoke cigars; male figure skaters are macho - but Dennis Rodman wears a dress. (Utne Reader "The Gender Blur: Where does biology end and society take over?" September-October 1998 pp 45-48)

On the other hand, a New York Times poll from a few years back shows that American teenagers - at least the boys - have "old-fashioned" expectations:

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Teen-Agers and Sex Roles

New York Times/CBS NEWS Poll, July 11, 1994

Many of the boys said they still believed strongly in a traditional 1950's-style marriage, in which the wife stays home, rears the children, cleans the house and does the cooking, while the husband is responsible for making the money and mowing the lawn.

"I think girls should do the cooking and cleaning because they're better at it, and boys should do the yard work and planting," said Breton Stout, 15 of Clovis, Calif. "I know a lot of girls think it's real sexist to say they belong in the kitchen, and they think we should kick in on cleaning, but I think they're wrong. It's not a boy's job."

Most of the girls interviewed were adamant about their plans to have a career and an egalitarian marriage. And many of the boys expressed firm convictions that a woman's place was in the home.

"I'd rather my wife stayed home," said David Wells, 17, of Mineral Wells, Tex. "Why? So I wouldn't have to do the cleaning. I do yard work. I have five sisters and they do the house cleaning. They don't ask me because they know I wouldn't do it. My mom is a nurse and she's gone from 5:30 A.M. to 5 P.M. My mom likes to work; she's always worked. But I wouldn't choose someone like that for my wife. She nags a lot, and I think it's because she's bound to be stressed out from working."

The girls surveyed, however, were overwhelmingly committed to having careers - and far less so to making and maintaining a marriage.

"I think a career is the most important thing, then children, then marriage," said Nicole Leesnan of Atlanta, Ill. "I've always wanted to succeed in a work field, maybe something like being a marine biologist. I know I will work. If I get married, I would want it to be with someone who did as much of the housework as me. I think girls are more liberated and guys are going to have to compromise. If they say they want their wives at home, I think it's because they want more power in the relationship."

[Based on nationwide telephone interviews with 1,055 teen-agers aged 13 to 17 conducted May 26 to June 1.]

[Tip: If you need a word defined online, use one of the dictionaries at the www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/ESL.html site.]

So you've read the reports. Now it's time to share your own ideas.

Think about these questions:

- What do you think about the position of American women and American men?
- Should young mothers work?
- Should men be expected to earn all the money for the family?
- Are men and women becoming too much alike?
- How have society's expectations for men and women changed in the past generations?
- Do you do things your mother/father would have never done?

Write your answers to some of these questions and add any other thoughts you have about American men and women today. Send them to your instructor in an email. Be sure to type **Opening 3** in the subject line of the email.

Sentence Patterns: The Simple Sentence

It can be difficult to describe the differences between American men and American women today. They wear the same clothes, do the same jobs, play the same games, have the same hair styles. But there are differences.

There are also differences in English sentence patterns. In lesson 2, you studied sentences like:

The child learns by playing.

People want more free time.

Cars make air pollution.

The banker will be here Friday.

What is true of all these sentences? Each has a subject and a verb and another part. In grammar terms, each of these sentences is called a **simple sentence**.

Simple here doesn't mean easy. *Simple* is a grammatical definition for sentences with these types of forms:

Trees grow.

(subject) (verb)

How about these sentences?

The child and the puppy learn by playing.

People and their families want more free time.

Cars or motorcycles make air pollution.

The banker, her assistant, or the loan officer will be here Friday.

These, too, are simple sentences. But what is different about these four sentences from the first four? You should notice that there are now two subjects or even three subjects in each sentence.

The child and the puppy learn by playing.

People and their families want more free time.

Cars or motorcycles make air pollution.

The banker, her assistant, or the loan officer will be here Friday.

A simple sentence may have a compound subject, like this:

Trees and flowers grow.

(subject) (subject) (verb)

How about these sentences?

The puppy learns and grows by playing.

People and their families want and need more free time.

Cars make or intensify air pollution.

The banker will be here and will testify on Friday.

Again, the same sentences, but this time there is more to the verb in each sentence.

The puppy learns and grows by playing.

People and their families want and need more free time.

Cars make or intensify air pollution.

The banker will be here and will testify on Friday.

A simple sentence may compound verb, like this:

Trees grow and die.

(subject) (verb) (verb)

A good way to expand simple sentences is with compound subjects and verbs. But there are more ways to make simple sentences more interesting. Take a look at these:

At an early age, the child learns by playing.

People want more free time in their work week.

Cars make air pollution at an alarming rate.

The banker will be here Friday with all the important documents.

Are there compound subjects or verbs in these sentences? No, these are simple sentences with one subject and one verb, but each sentence has more. More parts - what we have called other stuff - can be added to make a better sentence.

In these examples, **prepositional phrases** are added.

At an early age, the child learns by playing.

People want more free time in their work week.

Cars make air pollution at an alarming rate.

The banker will be here Friday with all the important documents.

So you see, you can add more to a simple sentence by using a **prepositional phrase** at the beginning or end of a sentence:

In the park, trees and flowers grow.
(prep. phrase)

Trees and flowers grow **in the park**.
(prep. phrase)

Prepositions

So, what's a prepositional phrase?

A prepositional phrase is a phrase that begins with a preposition.

So, what's a preposition?

A preposition is a little word or two or three that gives information about where something is at in space or time.

On above **in** to **with** below at **under** out
from **to** above in back of Next to **in front of**

You get the idea. Using a prepositional phrase adds detail about where or when the action happened.

Assignment 3.0

Here are three introductory prepositional phrases to begin sentences. Each of these prepositional phrases stands for a different time. Choose the correct phrase for each sentence and rewrite each.

Write **Assignment 3.0** in the subject line of your email. Send the email to your instructor.

In the past in America, *At the present time in America,* *In the future,*

1. pregnant women work.
2. pregnant women couldn't teach.
3. all women and men can vote.
4. women couldn't vote.
5. more jobs will be open to women.
6. men were not allowed to watch childbirth.
7. men rarely cooked or cleaned or helped with the children.
8. men will be caring for their children more.
9. men can be at their child's birth.
10. men are expected to help more with household chores.

Prepositional phrases can also be at the end of a sentence. In fact, more than one prepositional phrase can be added.

For example, there are three prepositional phrases in this sentence:

11. I came to the US with my husband in 1998.

Now, add your own concluding prepositional phrases to the end of each of these sentences.

11. I came to the US (when?)
12. There is good food (where?)
13. In twenty years, my children will live (where?)
14. I will be studying (how long?)
15. I get scared (when?)
16. I am in love (with whom?)
17. The car is (where?)
18. I believe (in what?)
19. I am working (for what?)
20. The cat jumped (where?)
21. Don't park (where?)
22. Tomorrow I will go (where?)

Sentence Patterns: Compound Sentences

In the last exercise, you practiced adding to your simple sentences. This process of adding detail will make your writing more polished and mature. But to really expand your writing style, you need to use two other forms of English sentence patterns.

Re- read these sentences from earlier in the lesson:

I have 5 sisters, and they do all the cleaning.

Men wear makeup, and women smoke cigars.

I think girls are more liberated, and guys are going to have to compromise.

Do you see the pattern? Just about in the middle of each sentence is a comma followed by **and**. On each side of this **, and** is a subject and a verb. It's two simple sentences joined together.

I have 5 sisters, and they do all the cleaning.

Men wear makeup, and women smoke cigars.

I think girls are more liberated, and guys are going to have to compromise.

This is the pattern you see:

, and

, but

, or

(sentence) , **nor** **(sentence)** .

, for

, so

, yet

This pattern joins two simple sentences with a comma and one of these little words which are called coordinating conjunctions.

The trick with using coordinating conjunctions is knowing the meaning each little word brings with it. But rather than focusing on all seven, learn the first two -- **and**, **but** -- and you will know the most common forms.

What do these sentences mean?

I am hungry, and I'm going to get lunch.

I am hungry, but I'm not going to get lunch.

And and **but** are opposites. Using **and** means you're adding more, similar information to the first sentence. Using **but** means you're adding more, dissimilar information to the first sentence.

For example, look again at these two sentences.

The first has a second part that adds more of the same idea. So **and** is used to join the sentences:

I am hungry, **and** I'm going to get lunch.

The second has a second part that adds more information that is dissimilar. So **but** is used to join the sentences:

I am hungry, **but** I'm not going to get lunch.

Note: Like nearly all words in English, **and** and **but** are not always used in this way. So don't automatically use a comma before them. Use a comma with **and** and **but** when they are joining two sentences.

For example, in these two sentences **and** and **but** are just joining words not sentences:

I like cats and dogs.

My husband likes cats but not dogs.

Assignment 3.1

Join each pair of sentences. Use **,and** or **,but** to join them. Remember to change the first letter of the second sentence to lower case and to use the comma before the coordinating conjunction.

Write **Assignment 3.1** in the subject line of your email. Send the email to your instructor.

1. Most Americans get married. Some Americans stay single.
2. Boys play sports. Girls play also.
3. In the past, gender roles were clearly defined. Now gender roles are less defined.
4. When the American constitution was written, women were not given the right to vote. Women got that right with the 19th Amendment.
5. Teen-age girls want careers. Teen-age boys want stay-at-home wives.
6. In some families, the woman is employed. The man stays home with the children.
7. Men discipline the children. Women take care of their children's daily needs.
8. New York is a big, noisy city. Many people enjoy living there.
9. Americans like to drive. Traffic can be very bad.
10. Babies are a lot of work. People love them anyway.

Another Compound Pattern

The other pattern for making compound sentences is even easier. Just use a semi-colon (;) in the middle of two simple sentences. You would use this pattern when the two sentences share very similar ideas.

(sentence) ; **(sentence)** .

Any of the sentences you wrote in **Assignment 3.1** could be formed with this pattern:

Teen-age girls want careers; teen-age boys want stay-at-home wives.

In some families, the woman is employed; the man stays home with the children.

Men discipline the children; women take care of their children's daily needs.

Sentence Patterns: Complex Sentences

Here's the third major sentence pattern:

Some couples live together if they are not sure about marriage.

Couples can marry when both the man and woman are 18 years old.

The average marrying age is rising because people are waiting longer to marry.

Again, to find the pattern, first look for the subjects and verbs.

Some couples live together if they are not sure about marriage.

Couples can marry when the man and woman are both 18 years old.

The average marrying age is rising because people are waiting longer to marry.

You should see that each of these sentences has a *subject - verb - other part* pattern followed by another

subject - verb - other part pattern. What's in between is a little word and no punctuation.

Like compound sentences, these complex sentences also have two simple sentences inside them. But in grammar terms, the two simple sentences are changed into dependent and independent clauses.

The word you add is called a subordinator. It makes one of the sentences dependent on the other for meaning.

Here's the pattern:

if

(independent clause) when (dependent clause) .

because

etc.

And just to keep it interesting, here's another complex sentence pattern:

If they are not sure about marriage, some couples live together.

When the man and woman are both 18 years old, couples can marry.

Because people are waiting longer to marry, the average marrying age is rising.

See the difference? These sentences have the same information as the ones above, but when the part with the subordinator comes first, a comma is needed to separate the dependent clause from the independent clause:

If they are not sure about marriage, some couples live together.

When the man and woman are both 18 years old, couples can marry.

Because people are waiting longer to marry, the average marrying age is rising.

Here's the pattern:

If

When

Because dependent clause , independent clause .

Etc.

So, now try it out!

Assignment 3.2

Combine these sentences using one of these subordinators: **because** or **when**. Read the pair of sentences and decide if **because** or **when** should be used at the beginning or in the middle of the combined sentence.

Remember, if you use the subordinator at the beginning of the two clauses, you'll use a comma to separate them. But if you use the subordinator in the middle of the two clauses, you won't use a comma. Review the patterns above if you're unsure what this looks like.

Write Assignment 3.2 in the subject line of your email and send it to your instructor.

Use <u>because</u> to join these sentences.

Hint: Use **because** in the middle of two of these sentences and at the beginning of the other two.

1. Some women work. They enjoy the responsibility.
2. They want to take care of their children. Some women quit work after having a baby.
3. Women have more choices. They expect to have a good career.
4. Some women work. They must support their family.

Use <u>when</u> to join these sentences.

Hint: Use **when** in the middle of two of these sentences and at the beginning of the other two.

5. Both parents work. There are often childcare problems.
6. There can be trouble. A couple hasn't talked about who will work and who will stay home.
7. They get married. Young men and women are unsure of their roles.
8. It is important to think about cultural expectations. You're raising a child.

Write your own complex sentences, using the subordinator <u>if</u>.

9. If _____ , _____.
10. _____ if _____.

The Next Step

Great! Using different patterns in your writing is called "having sentence variety." It shows you have a real understanding of the language. The feedback you get from your instructor on each writing exercise should give more an idea of how well you understand these patterns.

More information is available through many world wide web sources. Check out the **<u>Online Writing Lab</u>** .

Now you're ready for Lesson 4!

Writing Better Sentences

Lesson 4

The Opening

The world wide web is full of information on almost every topic. It has a great variety of advice for parents. Read this short question and answer from a web site called www.iamyourchild.org:

How do I raise my child to be an honest, caring and good person in this society?

Whether your child becomes caring or uncaring, good or bad, honest or dishonest has its roots in the first three years of life since it is during these years that your child starts to develop a sense of self. . . .Here are some suggestions for helping your child grow up to be caring, honest, and good:

- Be responsive to your young child's needs for comfort, attention and stimulation. Respect and consideration on your part will pave the path for cooperation from your child.
- Set rules for toddlers that are based on good reasons and are fair. Don't give your toddler a choice about rules that are most important ("You can't touch the stove"). Being firm and caring works best.
- Help your child learn to say "I'm sorry" and find ways to make up after your child has done something wrong. Say you are sorry if you have done something you wish you hadn't.
- Teach honesty. Be forthright with your children and help them learn to be the same with you.
- Build empathy. Call attention to your child's feelings ("Are you feeling sad?") and to the feelings of others ("I'm so happy that I talked to Grandma").
- Stay calm and keep things in perspective when in stressful situations.

Look again at the question, which started this list of advice:

How do I raise my child to be an honest, caring and good person in this society?

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Notice that it includes the word **society**. An important idea is that this is advice to help American parents raise American kids in an American environment. The surroundings - the society - do play a part in child development.

If you were raised somewhere other than the U.S., you can easily see differences between how parents and children acted in that culture versus this culture. These are cultural patterns.

Take some time to think about and write about being a parent - either as a parent right now or the parent you might be in the future.

- *What kind of parent do you want to be: just like your parents or very different from your parents?*
- *How will you discipline your child?*
- *How will you teach your child right from wrong?*
- *What are the most important things to consider when deciding to have a child?*

Write your answers to these questions and any other opinions you want to share about how to raise good people. Send your writing to your instructor. Type **Opening 4** in the subject line of your email.

A Difference of Style

In Lesson 3, you covered the basic patterns of English sentences. Patterns are important. But there's more to a sentence than fitting the proper mold. The purpose of writing is to convey meaning and also to express yourself through a style.

Read and compare these two paragraphs about parenting a young child:

Example 1:

> The child is born. He needs his mother or father to take care of him. They must change his diapers. They must feed him. They must keep him clean. His parents are his teachers. From them, he will learn to smile. He will learn to talk. He will learn to walk. If he is lucky, his parents will show him books. They will read to him. They will sing to him. They will dance with him. He will be ready for school when he is five. He will love to learn.

Example 2:

> When a child is born, he needs his mother and father to take care of him: change his diapers, feed him, and keep him clean. His parents are his first teachers, and from them, he will learn to smile, talk, and walk. If he is lucky, his parents will show him books; they will read, sing, and dance with him. He will be ready for school when he is five because he will love to learn.

How are the paragraphs different? Which one did a more educated person write? Do both paragraphs contain the same information?

Most people feel a more educated writer wrote the second paragraph. Because even though the ideas in both paragraphs are exactly the same, the style in the second adds something to make the writing seem very different.

Our focus during this lesson will build on your sentences -- adding more details, using more prepositional phrases, and writing with a variety of sentence patterns.

Sentence Patterns: A Review

Do you remember the simple, compound and complex sentence patterns?

Simple: Parents are their child's first teachers.

Compound: Parents are their child's first teachers, so parents need to be aware.

Complex: Because parents are their child's first teachers, they need to be aware of what their actions teach a child.

Here is an exercise in practicing sentence patterns again while sharing your ideas about raising honest, caring, and good kids.

Assignment 4.0

In this exercise, you will practice writing all three sentence types: simple, compound, and complex.

Each of these sentences contains a prepositional phrase. Complete each sentence with your own ideas and words.

Send your writing to your instructor in an email. Write **Assignment 4.0** in the subject line of your email.

Simple sentences with prepositional phrases:

1. In my opinion, children should _____.
2. Children should also_____ in my opinion.
3. In American society, parents _____.
4. Parents _____ in American society.

Compound sentences:

5. Children learn to be honest by _____, but they will learn to be dishonest if _____.
6. Parents teach children to be good by _____, and parents can also _____.

Complex sentences:

7. When a parent sets rules for her child, she should _____.
8. A parent should be firm and caring when she _____.
9. If a father is honest with his child, the child will _____.
10. If a mother wants her children to understand their own feelings, she should

---

Now write three of your own sentences giving parents advice. Be aware of the sentence pattern you are using.

11.

12.

13.

Expanding your sentences

OK. You've practiced the three main patterns again. But as you read English, you have realized there are a lot more than three patterns in this complicated language. And you're right. The ways of putting together English parts of speech to make sentences seems unending. And really, the best way to learn to write is to write, not study patterns.

So, the second part of this lesson will ask you to read parts of two articles about issues facing fathers and mothers in today's America, and then you'll need to write sentences about these issues.

First, here's part of an article about fathers. This study is actually from Canada, not the U.S., but the issues speak to fathers on the whole continent.

Does society support involved fathering?

Men are becoming more involved as fathers but old habits and institutional barriers slow the pace of change.

By Dr. Robert Glossop and Ish Theilheimer

Thirty years ago it was rare to see men diapering babies or dropping children off at the day care or school. Today, it is far more common, and nearly everyone knows some man who has chosen - or had to - stay home to look after young children. Active fathering, however, is still far from being the norm. "The biggest roadblocks to active participation by fathers in child care still are sociocultural in terms of how fathers see themselves," say Professor Donna Ler of the University of Guelph in Ontario. She was a director of the National ChildCare Study, which surveyed 22,000 families across Canada.

"I've been struck by the fact that fathers talk about 'baby sitting' while their wives are working. I think this is now changing very rapidly, and it has to." That's because most mothers of children now work outside the home, she says. Avoiding childcare is simply no longer an option for most men.

"With rare exceptions, women are providing care in the home as well as working the double shift," says Dr. Leer. Men are more involved than in the past, she says, but not nearly to the extent that women are. While fathers actively take part in leisure activities with children, the grunt work of cleaning, comforting, health care and so on still usually falls to Mom.

From Child & Family CANADA.

So there's the reality for American men. They need to be more actively involved with their children because their wives are working more.

Now here's the other side: a woman executive who decides to give up her career to stay home, and the research, which suggests she do it.

1970s Thinking Can't Solve 90s Ills

Friday, October 24, 1997

By one of those happy coincidences, this week's White House Conference on Child Care took place just a few weeks after Brenda Barnes, the executive in charge of PepsiCo's $7 billion North American beverage business, stunned the business and feminist world by calling it quits. "My children are growing up so fast, and I didn't want to miss them," she told The Wall Street Journal.

There's new research that suggests she was right to be concerned. In their just-released book-length study of more than 2,000 married families, "Generation At Risk" (Harvard University Press), sociologists Paul Amato and Alan Booth report new evidence that when mothers work long hours, their children do suffer some long-term consequences. As adults, sons whose mothers worked overtime earn about $9,000 per year less on average, while daughters of full-time working mothers are 166 percent more likely to divorce than women whose mothers worked part-time or not at all.

The most interesting aspect of Amato and Booth's findings is that what matters most to children's psychological well-being is not whether or how much mothers worked, but why. When mothers work because they "don't like staying at home" or because they wanted to be "more financially independent," their children are (as adults) less happy and have lower self-esteem than children or more family-centered women.

Of course, women who cut back on working hours to spend more time with their children do not do so because "studies show" this or that. They respond, from the heart, to personal experience. Most Americans remain ambivalent about day care.

A majority of married mothers work part-time or not at all. And according to a May 1997 survey by the Pew Research Center, even 69 percent of full-time working mothers would prefer to work part-time or stay at home.

Despite the vast changes in the lifestyles of American families, despite the risks posed by high rates of divorce and stagnant male wages, despite tempting new job opportunities, despite federal subsidies for day care, American families have shown a persistent, stubborn preference for caring for their own children. Even in families where mothers work full-time, more young children are cared for by fathers and other relatives than by day-care centers.

From The Daily News.

So, how much has society really changed? How do people really feel about being a father or a mother? Here's your chance to share your views.

Assignment 4.1

Write a LONG sentence answering each of these questions. To do this assignment you will have to write and then rewrite, giving yourself time to expand your ideas.

For example, the first question asks,

"At what age should women/men have kids?"

My first answer might be something like this:

"Women and men should be 21 or more."

Then I re-read my sentence. I see that the sentence can't stand alone; it needs more detail.

I might rewrite it this way:

> **"I believe that it is best for both the parents and children if women and men wait until they are at least 21 before they become parents."**

Then I might think of a related idea to add:

> **"I believe that it is best for both the parents and children if women and men wait until they are at least 21 before they become parents; in fact, an age range of the mid-20s to the mid-30s is ideal for starting a family."**

Now my sentence sounds like a well-thought answer to a simple question. I have expressed my opinions in a clearly defined way.

So, for this assignment, write at least two answers for each question -- your first written response and then a second sentence, which adds more detail to the first.

Send your writing to your instructor in an email. Type **Assignment 4.1** in the subject line of your email.

1. At what age should women/men have kids?
2. How many children should a couple have?
3. How do you teach a child to be good?
4. How should children help around the house; at what age should they have chores at home?
5. Who should care (feed, dress, wash, etc.) the children?
6. What makes a good mother?
7. What makes a good father?
8. Is daycare a good idea or a bad idea?
9. Have the expectations for men and women changed since you were a child? Will you parent differently than your parents?
10. How are boy and girl children different?

Great. You've completed your first big writing assignment. You and your instructor will decide which grammatical and mechanical skills you need to work on.

Sentence Errors: Fragments and Run-ons

Two common sentence errors are called fragments and run-ons.

Fragments

Take a look at these:

> At the University of Minnesota.
>
> Worked until after 10:00 PM on the assignment.
>
> The police talking to people.

What is your reaction to each of these statements? Probably, you felt you weren't getting the whole picture; there was meaning missing.

At the University of Minnesota.

What happened at the University of Minnesota?

Worked until after 10:00 PM on the assignment.

Who worked so late on the assignment?

The police talking to people.

What about the police?

And, you're right. Something is missing in each of those statements. Even though each begins with a capital letter and ends with a period, the statement doesn't make sense because it is missing either a subject or a verb or both!

Here are the corrected sentences:

At the University of Minnesota, there was a demonstration.

(This fragment needed to tell both who and what happened; it needed a subject and a verb)

I worked until after 10:00 PM on the assignment.

(This fragment needed to tell who worked; it needed a subject)

The police were talking to people.

(This fragment needed more information about the action; it needed a verb)

You will often see fragments in advertising.

The Real Thing.

Good Prices. Good Answers.

Real Solutions for Real Problems.

These look like sentences - capital letter at the beginning, period at the end. But they do not contain verbs, so they are incomplete sentences, or fragments.

Run-ons

Take a look at these sentences:

I go to school in the morning I work second shift from 3 - 11 PM.

Yia Her sends email to her brother he lives in Thailand.

Ahmed speaks Arabic, Somali, and English it seems easy for him.

What is your reaction to these three sentences? There is plenty of information; in fact, too much for a single sentence. Each of these three statements has more than a subject and a verb running in to each other. There are several ways to fix these sentences.

I go to school in the morning, and I work second shift from 3 - 11 PM.

(use a comma and a coordinating conjunction between the two independent clauses)
Yia Her sends email to her brother. He lives in Thailand.

(use a period between the two independent clauses)
Ahmed speaks Arabic, Somali, and English; it seems easy for him.

(use a semi-colon between the two independent clauses)

So, a run-on is two or more sentences run together without punctuation. For example, this run-on has three sentences all acting like one sentence:

> The American family needs to change in response to the changing world and the world needs to change in response to the families' needs we believe only a middle ground will bring success.

Here's a corrected form:

> The American family needs to change in response to the changing world, and the world needs to change in response to the families' needs. We believe only a middle ground will bring success.

For more practice with fragments and run-ons, try this exercise.

Assignment 4.2

In this assignment, you need to re-write the "Parenting Tips" with correct sentences.

All of the following sentences have errors: each is either a fragment or a run-on.

In order to correct each, you must first discover what kind of error it is. Do this by locating the subjects and verbs.

If the fragment is missing a subject or a verb, add it.

If a run-on has too many subjects and verbs without the correct punctuation, add the necessary period, semi-colon, or comma.

Send your writing in an email to your instructor. Type **Assignment 4.2** in the subject line of your email.

Parenting Tips

Safety Tips

You should check the baby's crib the slats should not be more than 2 3/8 inches apart.

Drinking hot liquids or smoking while holding the baby.

Toddlers away from hot stoves, fireplaces, irons, and space heaters.

Never leave the baby alone in the tub of water or on top of high places always keep one hand on the baby.

Toilet Training

The child sitting still for 5 minutes without help.

Your child may be ready to toilet train a wet or soiled diaper bothers him.

Let your child sit for as long as she wants praise success do not criticize failure.

If your child isn't ready.

Sleeping Tips

Call bedtime "special time" always read stories before bed.

A bed time routine.

Learning to fall back asleep when he wakes up at night.

You can sing a special song you can give a back rub any routine will help relax the child.

The Next Step

Writing is always a process. You will often write and then rewrite sentences and paragraphs until you are satisfied with the result. When you write, push yourself to add more information and better detail.

Now, you're ready for Lesson 5.

Writing Better Sentences

Lesson 5

The Opening

You have spent the past four lessons reading and writing about American culture. You've read about what an American expects. You've read about the changing roles of American men and American women. You've read about being a parent in the U.S. And you have written many sentences on these topics using many sentence patterns.

These ideas that are the basis of American culture are often called "The American Dream."

Although this phrase is now used mainly to sell cars and homes,

American Dream Realty **American Dream Auto**

the American dream is what drew millions of immigrants to the U.S. over the past 200 years. Immigrants came looking for a job, an education, a better home, a life with opportunity.

The American dream has been defined simply as opportunity - the chance to get a good education, a good job, a good home. But the vast majority of Americans have a job, some education, and a place to call home already, so what is the American dream to them?

Here is one writer's definition of the American dream.

In this part of an essay, the writer identifies three key parts of the American idea. To help you follow the essay's meaning, use the notes along the side.

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Chapter 2 -

The American Dream

There are three root ideas underlying the ethical, political, and social structure of the United States. Each of these three, taken alone, has a long history in other cultures, and occasionally two of them have appeared together. America has been unique, until recently, in combining all three into that particular mix that gives our country its special character.

Three main ideas have created American culture.

These three ideas serve as guiding principles for the nation as a whole. . . The first of these is the idea of Individual Rights: every person is endowed with certain "inalienable rights," rights that belong to him as his own, as his inherent possession - not granted as a gift by some benevolent ruler, not given as a privilege by an all-powerful state, but belonging to him, without qualification, as his rights. They cannot be removed, or explained away; nor can they be violated by any person, government, or power, as long as low and order prevail.. . .

Idea #1

Every person is born with certain rights.

The second root idea is Political Democracy: all decisions governing the community are decided by the community in a politically democratic way. The first root idea, of Individual Rights, covers those actions in a person's life that primarily affect himself, and for which he is individually responsible. The second root idea, of Political Democracy, covers those actions that primarily affect other people, and for which the community is responsible. There is no sharp dividing line; there never are sharp dividing lines in real life. But there are large areas to which each of these ideas applies independently, and these areas are generally agreed upon. . . .

Idea #2

Political democracy - taking a vote - is used to make decisions for a community.

The third root idea is Equal Opportunity: every person has an equal chance to obtain any goal. There is no privilege in America, a phenomenon stressed even in our written Constitution. People are born equal, and they start out with equal chances in life. Present-day realities fall far short of realizing this idea, but that should not blind us to the existence of the idea and to the immense role it has always played in our history. . . .

Idea #3

All people have equal value and should have the same opportunities.

Individual Rights, Political Democracy, and Equal Opportunity - these are the three root ideas of the American way of life. Our country has pioneered in their development individually and, especially, together. Take any one of them away, and you are in another country, another tradition, another culture. . . .

These three root ideas are inseparable from each other, and from our country's fate. They are the American Dream. To the extent that they are practiced, the American Dream becomes a reality.

Excerpted from "The Crisis in American Education."

Fairly difficult reading, but the writer makes a good argument: Americans truly value our individual rights, our political democracy, and the idea of equal opportunity.

Now, take some time to think and write about your idea of the American Dream. Here are some questions to think about as you plan your writing:

- What do people expect to find in America?
- What is your dream for the future?
- What opportunity do you want - what kind of education, what type of jobs?
- Do you think America offers you and your family something that another country doesn't?

Put your ideas into a few sentences. Send them to your instructor in an email; type Opening 5 in the subject line of the email.

Sentence Pairs

While the essay "The American Dream" has some big vocabulary words, the writing itself is clear. You can easily see how the ideas are connected. Each sentence leads into the next.

To make your ideas clear, you need to learn how to write sentences that belong together. These sentence pairs will lead you from one sentence into two or three. Eventually, you'll be writing clear paragraphs.

Read these sets of sentences:

> Computers have changed the American office. Many people drink coffee at work.
>
> Computers have changed the American office. Offices are different because of computers.
>
> Computers have changed the American office. Typewriters have been replaced by word processors.

Each of these sets starts with the same first sentence. Each is followed by a second sentence. But only **one** set is an example of a sentence pair.

Sentence pairs are just two sentences that belong together. They are not two sentences about the exact same thing. Rather, the second sentence adds to an idea brought up in the first.

Look again at the sentences.

> Computers have changed the American office. Many people drink coffee at work.

This is NOT an example of sentence pairs. The two sentences do not belong together. They share no common idea.

How about this?

> Computers have changed the American office. Offices are different because of computers.

This is also NOT an example of sentence pairs. The two sentences are **too** similar. They have the exact same idea. In a sentence pair, the second sentence should add to an idea in the first sentence, not say the same thing.

Try this:

Computers have changed the American office. Typewriters have been replaced by word processors.

Now, that's a sentence pair! The second sentence gives an example to help explain the first sentence.

Here's another example:

If this is the first sentence

America is a strong country.

then the second sentence should give some more information to help explain strong. Does strong mean a strong people, a strong economy, a strong military? What does the writer mean. A good second sentence will answer those questions.

America is a strong country. It has the longest running constitution in the world.

The second sentence lets you know the writer is thinking about a strong government.

Notice that the second sentence uses a pronoun - it. This is another way to make your sentence pair strong.

Using Pronouns

If a second sentence has the same subject as the first sentence, a pronoun is used to avoid repeating the subject. So, rather than

The cat was matted and bloody. The cat had fought with the neighbor's dog.

write

The cat was matted and bloody. It had fought with the neighbor's dog.

Remember. a pronoun takes the place of a noun. It must clearly refer to a specific noun. It must have the same number (either singular or plural) as the noun it replaces. And it must be written in the same person (first, second, third) as the noun it's replacing.

Which of these sentence pairs uses a pronoun correctly?

1. The children slept late that morning. She had been up most of the night because of the storm.
2. My husband went to Creighton University. They received a scholarship and financial aid.
3. Ms. Lindseth, the principal, is retiring in June. It has put in many years of service to the school district.
4. One of the problems the company faced was falling profits. It had to change fast!

The answer is NONE of the sentence pairs above uses pronouns the right way.

In sentence 1, **children** refers to more than one child, so the pronoun used to mean children must be plural:

1. The children slept late that morning. They had been up most of the night because of the storm.

In sentence 2, **husband** means one man, so the pronoun used to mean husband must be singular and male:

2. My husband went to Creighton University. He received a scholarship and financial aid.

In sentence 3, **Ms. Lindseth** is one woman, so the pronoun must be for a singular female:

3. Ms. Lindseth, the principal, is retiring in June. She has put in many years of service to the school district.

In the fourth example, it could correctly be used to mean one of the problems or the company, but it's unclear which one is meant, so a pronoun doesn't work well here:

4. One of the problems the company faced was falling profits. The company had to change fast!

If you're unsure of pronouns, look at the pronoun handout available through the Purdue Online Writing Lab.

Assignment 5.0

In this exercise, you will write sentence pairs. For each of the first nine sentences, write a good second sentence. Write the two sentences together.

For sentences 12 - 15, write your own first and second sentence in the sentence pair. Use a pronoun in the second sentence when you can.

For example, a student wrote this for number one:

1. People come to the U.S. for many different reasons. They often want to join family members already living in America.

Send your writing to your instructor in an email. Write **Assignment 5.0** in the subject line of your email.

1. People come to the U.S. for many different reasons. They . . .
2. A woman often dates for years before marrying. She . . .
3. A good education will help you reach your goals. It . . .
4. Americans strongly believe in individual rights.
5. The U.S. Constitution supports the idea of equality.
6. The weather is very different in the many parts of the U.S.
7. Americans typically work five days a week.
8. Americans love their cars.
9. Television is a part of most Americans' days.

Continue this exercise by writing your own sentence pairs.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

OK. That last exercise was not the first time you wrote two or more sentences together. But, hopefully, it has given you something to think about when you are writing more than a sentence.

Sentences need to build upon one another. Each sentence adds to the one before. It can add detail, description, the next step in a process, or the next part of the story. Think about that as you do this writing assignment.

Assignment 5.1

In the essay that started this lesson, you read one man's definition of the American Dream. He believes that what Americans care most about are individual rights, political democracy, and equal opportunity.

For this writing assignment, you need to put your views about these three ideas into writing. Try to use the skills you've practiced over the past lessons to write sentences in a variety of forms. Make your sentences build upon one another.

For each of these three ideas, write an answer from your own personal story. Add detail from your experience. Add description from your life.

Send your completed writing to your instructor in an email. Write **Assignment 5.1** on the subject line of your email.

1. What individual rights do you believe all people have?

   Use these questions to help you come up with ideas:

   What rights should you have?

   The right to an education, to own a gun, to sue the President?

   Why do you have these rights?

   Who should grant them to you?

2. What are the good and bad things about living in a political democracy like the U.S.?

   Use these questions to help you come up with ideas:
   Do you vote?

   Do you think one person's vote counts?

   If you support individual rights, than why should the majority rule?

3. What has been your experience with equal opportunity?

   Use these questions to help you come up with ideas:

   Have you always had the same chance as anyone else for an education, a job, a place to live?

   How should equal opportunity be put into practice?

   Should there be laws to make sure people get the same chance as everyone else?

The Next Step

Great! You've done more writing in this lesson than any lesson that came before. Keep it up in Lesson 6!

Writing Better Sentences

Lesson 6

The Opening

In this lesson, you will focus on connecting your sentences. You will use transition words and phrases to show relationships between ideas. You will study patterns of multi-sentence writings.

Some patterns are easy to see and follow. If you need to give a friend directions to your house, you might think something like this:

> I-90 going south.
>
> Fullerton Avenue exit
>
> turn left
>
> eight blocks on Fullerton.
>
> second stop light, that's Eighth Street.
>
> turn right on Eighth Street
>
> a half mile to the 400 block
>
> house is number 478.

However, this is only a list. It can be hard for someone else to understand the connection between the separate items. If you were to tell your friend directions to your place, you might say:

> First, get on I-90 going south. Then take the Fullerton Avenue exit. At the bottom of the exit, turn left. Next, go eight blocks on Fullerton. When you come to the second stop light, that's Eighth Street. So turn right on Eighth Street. Finally, drive about a half mile to the 400 block, and my house is number 478.

This is much easier to understand because you have connected the ideas. It is as if the sentences join together to make the route for you.

One of the main reasons this group of sentences works so well together are the little words at the beginning of the sentences. These are transitional words and phrases.

> First, get on I-90 going south. Then take the Fullerton Avenue exit. At the bottom of the exit, turn left. Next, go eight blocks on Fullerton. When you come to the second stop light, that's

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Eighth Street. So turn right on Eighth Street. Finally, drive about a half mile to the 400 block, and my house is number 478.

Keeping this example in mind, write a set of directions from one place to another: from your home to a store, for example. Write your directions as clearly as possible. Use as much detail as you can and make the connections between the ideas clear to your reader.

Send your directions to your instructor. Write **Opening 6** in the subject line of the email. Then continue on with the lesson.

Transitions

A transition happens at a moment of change. In life, a big transition is leaving school and going to work. In writing, transitions are used by a writer to help his readers understand the change from one sentence to another and from one idea to another.

Transitional words and phrases show connections between sentences. The written directions in the opening assignment have transitions that tell the reader how to follow the directions.

There is more than one way to show the connection between sentences and to create a smooth flow of ideas. Look at these sentences:

1. *America has a variety of natural beauty. Its giant mountains fall and become vast prairies.*

2. *Mayra had many things to do before leaving the house each morning. First, she had to feed the animals.*

3. *Clean water is essential to human life. Freedom of thought is essential to man's existence.*

4. *Clean water is essential to human life. In the same way, we must have freedom.*

Each of the sentence pairs above is connected by a transitional techniques. Take a closer look at each to define these four transitional techniques:

- **In the second sentence, repeat key words from the previous sentence, or refer to the key ideas with pronouns.**

  1 . America has a variety of natural beauty. Its giant mountains fall and become vast prairie lands.

  Using "Its" ties the second sentence to the first. (Remember doing this last lesson?)

- **Use numbers like first, second, third.**

  2. Mayra had many things to do before leaving the house each morning. First , she had to feed the animals.

- **Use parallel sentence structure - the same words or phrases - in both sentences.**

  3. Clean water is essential to human life. Freedom of thought is essential to man's existence.

  Using the same verb and adjective followed by a prepositional phrase ties the sentences together.

- **Use transitional words or phrases to show relationships.**

  4. Clean water is essential to human life. In the same way , we must have freedom .

There are many transitional words and phrases. To use them well, you must understand what kind of

relationship they describe.

Here's a chart with some of the most common transitions:

To **Add** something, use	*again, also, and, besides, equally important, next, too, finally, further, furthermore, in addition, last, likewise, moreover*
To make something, **clearer** use	*in fact, as a matter of fact, clearly, evidently, of course, too, obviously, in other words*
To **compare,** use	*likewise, in like manner, similarly*
To **show contrast**, use	*although, at the same time, but, conversely, however, in contrast, in spite of, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the one hand, on the other hand, still, yet*
To **give examples,** use	*for example, for instance, that is, thus*
To **indicate place**, use	*above, below, beyond, close by, nearby, inside, next to, opposite, outside, within, without*
To **show a result**, use	*accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, hence, in short, therefore, thus, then*
To give a **summary**, use	*in brief, in conclusion, in short, in sum, on the whole, to conclude, to sum up, to summarize*
To show **time**, use	*after, afterwards, at last, at length, at the same time, before, during, immediately, in the meantime, lately, meanwhile, since, presently, shortly, soon, temporarily, then, thereafter, thereupon, until, while*

The point is, a good writer leads the reader through her thought processes. She helps the reader to understand why one sentence is placed next to another, why one idea follows the other.

Study these examples and notice how the transitional words are used:

- I lost my car keys. Also, I forgot about the meeting at work.
  (more information on why it's been a bad day)
- I looked all over for my keys. Afterwards, I found them in my back pocket.
  (one event happened before the other)
- He's very intelligent. However, he can't manage his money.
  (these details about him are contrasts, they're opposite ideas)
- I was always scared to talk in front of a group; as a result, I chose a job that doesn't require public speaking.
  (one thing caused the other)
- Americans are fatter than Frenchmen; in fact, Americans are fatter than people from any other country.
  (the second detail makes the situation clearer)

The transition words are used to show the connection between the ideas.

Now look at the punctuation pattern used in the first three sample sentences:

- I lost my car keys. Also, I forgot about the meeting at work.
- I looked all over for my keys. Afterwards, I found them in my back pocket.
- He's very intelligent. However, he can't manage his money.

This is the pattern:

_____ .Transitional word or phrase, _____ .

You see that a transition can be used to start the second sentence in a sentence pair. And the transition word has a comma after it to set it off from the sentence.

Here's a second pattern:

- I was always scared to talk in front of a group; as a result, I chose a job that doesn't require public speaking.
- Americans are fatter than Frenchmen; in fact, Americans are fatter than people from any other country.

This is the pattern:

_____ ;transitional word or phrase, _____ .

A transition word or phrase can be used in the middle of a complex sentence. Here you use a semi-colon in front of the transition and a comma after it.

Assignment 6.0

Use a transitional word or phrase from each of the meaning groups in the chart above. Write two sentences connected with the right relationship.

You can use either sentence pattern:

1) two sentences with the transition starting the second sentence:

_____ . Transitional word or phrase, _____.
He's very intelligent. However, he can't manage his money.
Or

2) a single complex sentence with a semi-colon at the end of the first sentence, followed by the transition, a comma, and the second sentence:

_____ ; transitional word or phrase, _____ .
My kids won't eat liver ; therefore, I never make it.

To begin, go to the transition chart and choose a transitional word or phrase that fits the meaning. Then write your own sentences.

For example, for number one a student chose the transitional phrase *equally important* . Then she wrote,

> *1. You need to find a job that pays you a good wage. Equally important, you should find challenging and enjoyable work.*

Send your completed writing to your instructor in an email. Type **Assignment 6.0** in the subject line of your email.

1. Choose a transition from the chart which is used **To add something**. Write two sentences joined with this transition.

2. Choose a transition from the chart which is used **To make something clearer**. Write two sentences joined with this transition.

3. Choose a transition from the chart which is used **To compare**. Write two sentences joined with this transition.

4. Choose a transition from the chart which is used **To show contrast**. Write two sentences joined with this transition.

5. Choose a transition from the chart which is used **To give examples**. Write a complex sentence using this transition.

6. Choose a transition from the chart which is used **To indicate place**. Write a complex sentence using this transition.

7. Choose a transition from the chart which is used **To show a result**. Write a complex sentence using this transition.

8. Choose a transition from the chart which is used **To give a summary**. Write a complex sentence using this transition.

9. Choose a transition from the chart which is used **To indicate time**. Write a complex sentence using this transition.

In Assignment 6.0, you wrote in set organizational patterns. As a paragraph and essay writer, you will have to use these patterns.

American Dream Awards

As you read these two short profiles of adult learners, try to pick out the transitions being used. The profiles are of two of the winners of last year's American Dream Awards. The notes in the margin outline the focus of the paragraphs.

Think also about the past discussions on the American dream as you read about Octavio Campos and Khalida Smalls.

(You can read about all the winning learners and instructors at http://www.stw.ed.gov/pr/dream.htm.)

Octavio Campos

Wilson Technological Center - Northport Campus
Northport, New York

Writers use a pattern to organize their ideas. Notice this pattern.

Octavio Campos is an outstanding student in his second year of the Automotive Technology program at Wilson Technological Center. He is also a highly valued employee of Automotive Technology of Huntington, a gas and full service station.

Paragraph #1: What Octavio is currently doing

Octavio moved to the United States six years ago at the age of eleven from El Salvador. His adjustment to school life in America was slow and he had a difficult time accepting the culture and customs of American society. As a young immigrant, his greatest challenge was dealing with racism for the first time. Octavio became withdrawn and shut out his family. After a time he turned to religion for solace and he began to open up and become assimilated into his new culture.

Paragraph #2: Octavio's past

Working with cars began as a hobby for Octavio until he began to think about his long range goals for the future. Octavio's commitment to self development and improvement is apparent in his dedication to excelling in his automotive program. . . . Octavio plans to apply the American Dream Award towards his higher education and the continuation of his professional and academic growth.

Paragraph #3: Octavio's plans for the future

Khalida Smalls

Boston Private Industry Council
Boston, Massachusetts

Notice the pattern

Khalida Smalls has come a long way since she dropped out of high school almost 2 years ago. In a tremendous effort to reshape her life and change her attitude, Khalida studied on her own and received her GED in two months (while solely raising her infant son.) Once she accomplished her GED she knew her life would open up and Khalida was soon accepted to community college.

Paragraph #1 begins with the past - what happened 2 years ago - and hints at the future

Prior to the beginning of her new school year, Khalida participated in a

summer job placement through the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC). . . .Khalida interviewed for and was offered an office position at a local development center for court-involved young men. "I know I want to work with this population of people," she said. "I want to give back the opportunities I have been given and allow someone else to experience what the world has to offer."	Paragraph #2 continues Khalida's story through time
Khalida's involvement with Project LEEO has extended beyond just a summer position. She presented to the center's director her idea for a program geared toward young women, a division yet to be developed by the organization. Her initiative was met with approval and praise. She will return to Project LEEO throughout her first year at college to discuss the plans further and will focus her academic career on courses relevant to this plan of action, such as business administration and program development.	Paragraph #3: Khalida's recent past and looking toward the future
As a recipient of the American Dream Award, Khalida will invest in the establishment of a women's division at Project LEEO, as well as her education. She feels confident that her motivation and concern, coupled with the necessary support, will help make her dreams a reality.	Paragraph #4: a final positive statement

For these two people, the American dream is about finding work that is fulfilling, getting financial independence, and feeling successful. Think about these profiles as you work on Assignment 6.1.

Assignment 6.1

Write a profile of yourself as if you had just won this award. Use your name rather than the pronoun I.

Follow the pattern you saw used in Octavio's essay. Describe your past challenges and obstacles. Talk about your future plans.

As you put sentences together, think about the connection you want to make between them. Use transitional techniques - pronouns, numbering, parallel structure, transitional words and phrases - to make the connection.

Send your writing to your instructor in an email. Write **Assignment 6.1** in the subject line of your email.

The Next Step

Using transition words to write sentences in certain patterns connects your sentences and ideas. This helps your reader understand your message. Now you're ready to write whole paragraphs that have a pattern. See you at Lesson 7!

Writing Better Sentences

Lesson 7

The Opening

Congratulations! You've made your way through all the lessons, and you've written many, many good sentences.

This final lesson is a jumping off point into longer compositions. Before you begin the lesson, take a few minutes to think about the concepts you've learned.

Think about the main topics we've covered:

Basic sentence form - capital letter, final punctuation

Basic sentence structure - subject, verb, other stuff

Sentence patterns - simple, compound, complex

Sentence variety - using different patterns and varying sentence length

Sentence pairs - writing a good second sentence

Transitional words and phrases - connecting your sentences

Write a few sentences summarizing what you've learned.

- Think about how this learning has changed the way you write.
- Think about what can't be taught about writing.
- Think about how the ideas for writing really come from within you.

Send the email to your instructor. Write **Opening 7** in the subject line.

Sentence Patterns

The next step in your writing education is learning about paragraphs and longer compositions. This course may

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be the last writing instruction you have before starting a college writing class. In a college class, your instructor will want you to write paragraphs and essays in certain forms or patterns. In preparation for this, our final study together will be about the patterns of paragraphs and essays.

These patterns go by many names. The patterns are called methods of organization, or organizational schemes, or rhetorical modes. By any name, they are ways of putting sentences together to help a reader understand more about what you're writing and why you're writing it.

Here is a chart outlining the most common methods of organization. You may want to print it out for future reference.

Methods of Organization

When writers put sentences together to form paragraphs, they choose a way of organizing their ideas. The different forms of organization have different purposes. Here are some of the most commonly used:

space order	describing the physical relationship of objects	used to "paint a picture" of a place in the reader's mind
time order	telling what happened in the order in which it happened, from start to finish	used to "walk" the reader through a period of time
using examples	describing specific examples to prove a point	used to clearly illustrate an idea
definition	defining a word or a concept with other words, examples, etc.	used when introducing a new term or idea
persuasion	arguing your side of an issue	used to prove that your opinion on a certain issue is the right opinion
description	describing someone or some thing with sensory words	used to present the clearest picture of a person or thing
cause and effect	showing how one event (the cause) makes another event happen (the effect)	used to show the relationship between two events
comparison/contrast	focuses on what is the same or different about two things	used to either tie two things together (comparison) or set them apart (contrast)

Before you begin writing in these patterns, practice finding them.

Assignment 7.0

Here are some short paragraphs. Read them and decide which of the suggested organizational methods is used in each paragraph.

Type your answers in an email for your instructor. Write **Assignment 7.0** in the subject line of your email.

1. *Is this an example of comparison/contrast, space order, or using examples?*

The state of Minnesota has many different landscapes. The pine forests of the North stand 100 feet tall, and the ground under those massive trees is soft with layers of sweet smelling pine needles. The hardwood forests of the southwest are thick with underbrush. In the summer these forests are so dense it is hard to walk in them while in the winter they stand empty of leaves. In between the forests are the prairies: large stretches of grassland and farmland that continue to the horizon.

2. *Is this an example of comparison/contrast, space order, or using examples?*

Many activities go on at the new park downtown. Today some students played tennis while others were shooting baskets. Some younger kids jumped rope and played kick ball. A man and his dog played frisbee while a few joggers ran along the river front.

3. *Is this an example of comparison/contrast, space order, or using examples?*

Joan's desk is a perfect example of her need for order. Joan keeps her clock on the right corner of her desk and her lamp in the left corner. Toward the back of the desk is her pile of books waiting to be read while directly in front of her is a container of sharpened pencils and a clean pad of paper. Nothing is ever out of place.

4. *Is this an example of definition, persuasion, or time order?*

I hurried to call the kids indoors when I heard the tornado siren blow. They came running from down the block while the rain beat down on them. Then I closed the doors and windows. Finally, I grabbed the flashlight and radio and raced to the basement.

5. *Is this an example of definition, persuasion, or time order?*

Education is a word with many meanings. It is usually used to mean the years spent in school: formal education that happens with a teacher. However, education can also mean life's lessons as when someone says, "I got my education on the street." Another meaning of education is an important life experience: "Working at the drop-in center was a real education." All these meanings share the idea of value and stress that education, in any form, is important.

6. *Is this an example of definition, persuasion, or time order?*

Athletics deserve the place they hold in our schools. Athletics bring school spirit and provide entertainment for both participants and spectators. They lead to community involvement and, of course, provide a place for boys and girls to be physically challenged. We would be foolish to reduce our athletic programs.

7. *Is this an example of cause and effect, description, or time order?*

Neng is the youngest child in the first grade. She has soft black hair, deep brown eyes with long black lashes, and a way of smiling up at the teacher that helps her get her way. She's very slight but strong enough to be the best kickball player in her class.

8. *Is this an example of cause and effect, description, or time order?*

In early November, heavy rain pounded California, and the surf was very high. Because of this,

people lost homes and property along the coast line. Even highways were washed out as mud slides occurred. The federal government has sent disaster relief funds to the area.

9. *Is this an example of cause and effect, description, or time order?*

Ladan's morning schedule began with the alarm at 6:30 and a quick bath. Then she woke the children, bathed and dressed them, and began to prepare their breakfast. Finally, she gulped down her own coffee and toast, walked the kids to their bus stop, and hurried to catch her own bus to work.

Using More Than One Method

Good, you were able to see the different patterns of organization at work. Of course, many paragraphs and papers will be a combination of organizational methods.

- During a persuasive essay, you may use examples.
- In a time order paragraph, you may need to use some definitions.

For example, here's a passage from the famous American novel Huck Finn by Mark Twain. As Huck, a young, uneducated boy, describes a morning on the Mississippi River, notice organizational methods used:

Excerpt from Huck Finn

by Mark Twain

Two or three days and nights went by; I reckon I might say they swum by, they slid along so quiet and smooth and lovely. Here is the way we put in the time. It was a monstrous big river down there - sometimes a mile and a half wide; we run nights, and laid up and hid day-times; soon as night was most gone, we stopped navigating and tied up - nearly always in the dead water under a tow-head; and then cut young cottonwoods and willows and hid the raft with them. Then we set out the lines. Next we slid into the river and had a swim, so as to freshen up and cool off; then we set down on the sandy bottom where the water was about knee deep, and watched the daylight come. Not a sound, anywheres - perfectly still - just like the whole world was asleep, only sometimes the bull-frogs a-cluttering, maybe. The first things to see, looking away over the water, was a kind of dull line - that was the woods on t'other side - you couldn't make nothing else out; then a pale place in the sky; then more paleness, spreading around; then gray; you could see little dark spots drifting along, ever so far away - trading scows, and such things' and long black streaks - rafts; sometimes you could hear a sweep screaking; or humbled up voices, it was so still, and sounds come so far; and by-and-by you could seek a streak on the water which you know by the look of the streak that there's a snag there in a swift current which breaks on it and makes that streak look that way; and you see the mist curl up off of the water, and the east reddens up, and the river, and you make out a log cabin in the edge of the woods, away on the bank on t'other side of the river, being a wood-yard, likely, and piled by them cheats so you can throw a dog through it anywheres; then the nice breeze spring up, and comes fanning you from over there, so cool and fresh, and sweet to smell, on account of the woods and the flowers; but sometimes not that way, because they've left dead fish laying around, gars, and such,

Overall pattern: time order

Additional pattern: descriptive order

and they do get pretty rank; and next you've got the full day, and everything smiling in the sun, and the song-birds just going it!

This is the first example you've read from fiction - a story. The style of the language is very different from the nonfiction you've been reading, but the organizational methods are familiar.

While methods can be used together, there is usually one dominant organizational method.

As a final writing exercise, use these methods to write summaries on some of the ideas we've discussed over the past weeks.

Assignment 7.1

Write a short paragraph on each topic using the organizational style assigned. This is your final writing assignment of the course. As always, this assignment will go through a first and final draft process. Try to draw on all the lessons you've learned to make these paragraphs your best writing.

Send the first draft of your writing to your instructor. Type **Assignment 7.1** in the subject line of your email.

1. Describe where your town is located in the United States -- Use a **space order** organizational pattern, so the reader can have a mental map of the United States and picture your town's position within it.

2. Tell about a time you met or worked with someone from a different culture - use a **time order** organizational pattern to describe the event as it happened from start to finish.

3. Write a physical description of yourself - use a **description** organizational pattern with enough details so the reader can get a mental picture of you.

4. Support the statement "Americans have a pretty easy life" - use **examples** as your organizational pattern to clearly show how Americans' lives are "easy."

5. Describe the differences between daily life as a child and daily life as an adult - use a **comparison/contrast** organizational pattern to focus on the aspects that are the same and then different.

6. Write a paragraph supporting either "American schools should teach kids in their own languages" or "American schools should teach all kids in English." Use a **persuasion** organizational pattern to convince people to agree with your opinion.

Congratulations! You have made it through the Writing Better Sentences course. Use what you've learned to continue improving your personal and professional writing.

Send your comments about the course and any suggestions for improvement to judy.mortrude@spps.org. Thanks for all your hard work!

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Writing Better Sentences

Using E-mail with These Lessons

This course was written to be used either in a classroom setting or by students enrolled in a distance education program. With the support of a grant from the Minnesota Department of Children, Families,and Learning it was piloted with several students working from their home computers and communicating with their teacher via e-mail. The infrastructure to support this kind of interaction between ABE students and teachers all over the state of Minnesota is not yet in place, so the e-mail button on the course menu has temporarily been deactivated.

When more funding is secured, private e-mail and conferencing will be offered to ABE teachers and students statewide who are interested in trying this and other courses online, using a distance education model.

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